2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

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285
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Rainy weather. The girls of the village off to gather mushrooms.
Men make the carrying-baskets.

[facing p. 42]

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

[facing p. 84]

Building a Bemba granary.

Plastering the granary walls.

Climbing the granary ladder to get out supplies.

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2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

[Facing p. 90]

The Bemba hearth.
(Photograph posed in roofless house.)

Making a cooking-pot.

The finished pot set to dry before firing.

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2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

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Winnowing the grain.
Pounding the millet.

[facing p. 101]

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

142
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Women breaking up an old millet garden before sowing. Mound cultivation. Men heaping up new ground into mounds.

[facing p. 146]

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

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Heads of cooking-teams. Four grandmothers ruling over 'big houses'. Women and children eat together.

[facing p. 192]

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

pots, and the same number of baskets and a couple of blankets would be the usual equipment. Few men own more than one cloth, or an outfit of European clothes such as shorts and a shirt, or the tattered remnants of these. Women rarely have more than one frock or cloth. Besides these, the people treasure certain hereditary objects of no economic value such as the bow of the man, the bead girdle (*umushingo*) of the woman, and certain beads, ivory bracelets, or anklets. A few Bemba own goats and sheep, and many keep chickens and pigeons. All these possessions are individually owned and bequeathed to descendants according to rule, i.e. the heirlooms described above descend to the legal heirs, the maternal nephews or grandsons. Any personal property made by a man, or acquired by his efforts, may go to his own sons, his wife, or his sister, as the case may be. His clothes or money, or his hut, for the year or two it remains habitable, go to his wife or his children, and the working pots and baskets to the wife or the sister.

If the material possessions of the Bemba are few in number, they are also impermanent. Few objects can be reckoned as lasting more than four or five years. It is impossible to protect the wood of houses and furniture from the ravages of white ants, and the same applies to baskets, mats, and most of the other contents of an ordinary hut. Even sacred relics guarded with the utmost care seem to have been frequently destroyed in the past by insects or fire, and most of the surviving heirlooms are those of iron or copper, ivory, or a few beads. This in itself affects the people's attitude to property, and the social values associated with its accumulation.

To turn to present-day conditions, it must be realized that a money income is not yet a universal measure of wealth in this community. The amount of money the individual Bemba handles each year is very small. I put it at 15*s.* to £1 on an average (cf. Chap. X). Money can only be obtained by work for Europeans or occasionally for fellow Africans. The average unskilled wage was 7*s.* 6*d.* a month during my stay, and the opportunities for regular employment in the country were very few.[1] Practically only the domestic servants and clerks could be considered as regular wage earners, and these were naturally a very small proportion of the community. A certain amount of money is said to

[1] Cf. the figures for absentee labour given in Chapter I. It was reckoned in 1934 that in the Kasama area only 30 per cent. could have earned their tax of 10*s.* locally.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

556 We can see in fact that as far as the production of a large surplus of millet is concerned there were no strong motives in this society to do so, either to attain kudos, to fulfil marriage contracts, to increase material prosperity, or to leave wealth to the next generation.

New Economic Ambitions.

556 177 This general attitude to accumulation exists to a large extent to-day, and among the older men the same political ambitions remain operative. The desire to build up a village is still very pronounced, and I have known cases where members of the royal clan, earning good wages at the mines, threw up their jobs if offered a headmanship at home. In the same way, I found that young men who had succeeded to some headmanship or small office, such as a hereditary priesthood, early in life, preferred to hold this position rather than leaving to work for Europeans.

177 ● 291 556 But for the rest of the community the introduction of British rule, money, and European goods has cut completely across old economic objectives with marked effects on the food-supply. In particular, the strength of the Bemba craving for clothes is almost impossible to explain to a reader without African experience. To understand it, it would be necessary to listen to the constant talk of natives about clothes and prices anywhere near a white town, to watch the men and women crowding round the European stores in a place like Kasama—where the tailors sit and machine their customers' frocks in the street—or to see the swagger of the booted and trousered young man in front of the women of his village. This would give some idea of the passionate desire of these people to possess, by some means or other, European clothes. It must be remembered that cloth was always thought valuable in this area since its first appearance in the hands of Arab traders in the middle of the nineteenth century. Bales of cloth were exchanged for slaves and remained the chiefs' monopoly, so that to wear cotton cloth, as distinct from the local bark-cloth, was a sign of royal favour. In any case the Bemba, like the Luba-speaking peoples of the Congo, have been described as fully clothed up to their armpits by the earliest

contents and that of the Bemba in which even the householder is not quite aware of the amount of food she possesses. B. Malinowski, Coral Gardens and their Magic, 1935, vol. i, pp. 240–3, 243–53, 257.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

travellers in those regions.[1] So the desire for garments of some sort is not a new one, but it is the first time in history that it has been open to commoners, as distinct from chiefs and notables, to raise their status in this way. Clothes are a source of excitement and delight at this stage of transition, and a sign of distinction between the civilized man and the bush native.[2]

I have described this craving for European goods because it directly affects the production and storage of food. Conditions in this area are such that money cannot be regularly earned or accumulated, or used to produce an all-round improvement in the standard of living. But the desire for clothes is at present one of the chief incentives which drives men to leave the territory to look for work, and a man gone to the mines is said to be away 'clothing his wife'. Further, as regards the stay-at-home native, it can be said at once that where millet can be sold for money, either to Europeans or to urban natives, the natives always succumb to the temptation. It is unfortunate that in this area the chief saleable crop is a staple food, for it means that the people sell their supplies often at the lowest prices without thought of the hunger they must presently suffer. Dealers in grain will tell you that in times of famine millet is often produced somehow and from somewhere, if only it can be sold for money. I have myself seen women near the motor road sell their last basket of grain for a cheap cotton vest torn in a week with the hard garden work. The old realistic attitude towards the value of food described in Chapter III seems completely abandoned in these circumstances. Old men sometimes say: 'You can't fill your belly with shillings', but the younger men and women would rather go without food than clothing, and wherever money has been substituted for tribal obligations formerly paid in work or foodstuffs, these sums are never spent on food, but always on European goods. The cases of the payments to the father-in-law have already been described, but it is equally true that money paid to the chief in lieu of his garden labour would

[1] As compared with the Ila on the Kafue River who have remained naked until very recently.

[2] A missionary, clad himself in an open shirt, shorts, and sandals, once asked one of his teachers why he went about on a sweltering day in a thick suit with long woollen stockings and two shirts. The teacher replied: 'You could go naked but people would still know you had clothes in your cupboard, but if I didn't wear my clothes people would say I was an underwear fellow with nothing more than a pair of shorts.'

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

177 probably not be used for this purpose but for acquiring European
291 objects of different kinds.
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556 To conclude, we are dealing with an economic system in which the accumulation of large quantities of any type of material goods was neither very possible nor considered desirable. The accumulation of food was not an end in itself for the chief or notable, but rather a means to enable him to build up a large following of people which was to him the highest aim in life. His economic assets consisted in rights over food produced by others as well as in the cultivation of millet himself. For the commoner, the possession of excessive food supplies was definitely considered unsuitable, and people were afraid to admit they had such a store. In short the surplus crop was not a Bemba ideal. Under modern conditions the desire for European goods, and in particular clothes, leads the people to squander even their available food supplies on objects which have become more important to them.

The Use of Money.

436 Money has been used in this territory for about thirty years.
177 The first white administrators in the district were told to encourage its circulation as 'a civilizing influence' and, as soon as possible, wages were paid and taxes levied in currency and not in kind. European stores were opened shortly after, and very few of these shops will now accept payment in kind instead of money. It is, therefore, worth considering this specific question: Has the introduction of a money currency facilitated the distribution of food?

436 In the first place, the use of coins in everyday life is still very limited. This is chiefly due to the shortage of money in the area as a whole. No native could hope to substitute cash payments for all his present kinship obligations or other needs of life because he would rarely be in a position to do so. But it is also a fact that the Bemba still use money in a completely different fashion from our own. They regard it as a medium to be used in specific transactions only. These are, naturally, the purchase of European goods and the payment of tax, and, less obviously, marriage payments, sums paid for native crafts, the fulfilment of ceremonial obligations, and debts of honour. The Bemba buy European goods with money because they can get them in no other way. They pay taxes in money for the same reason. The substitution of small sums for the marriage payment has been an easy transition from

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

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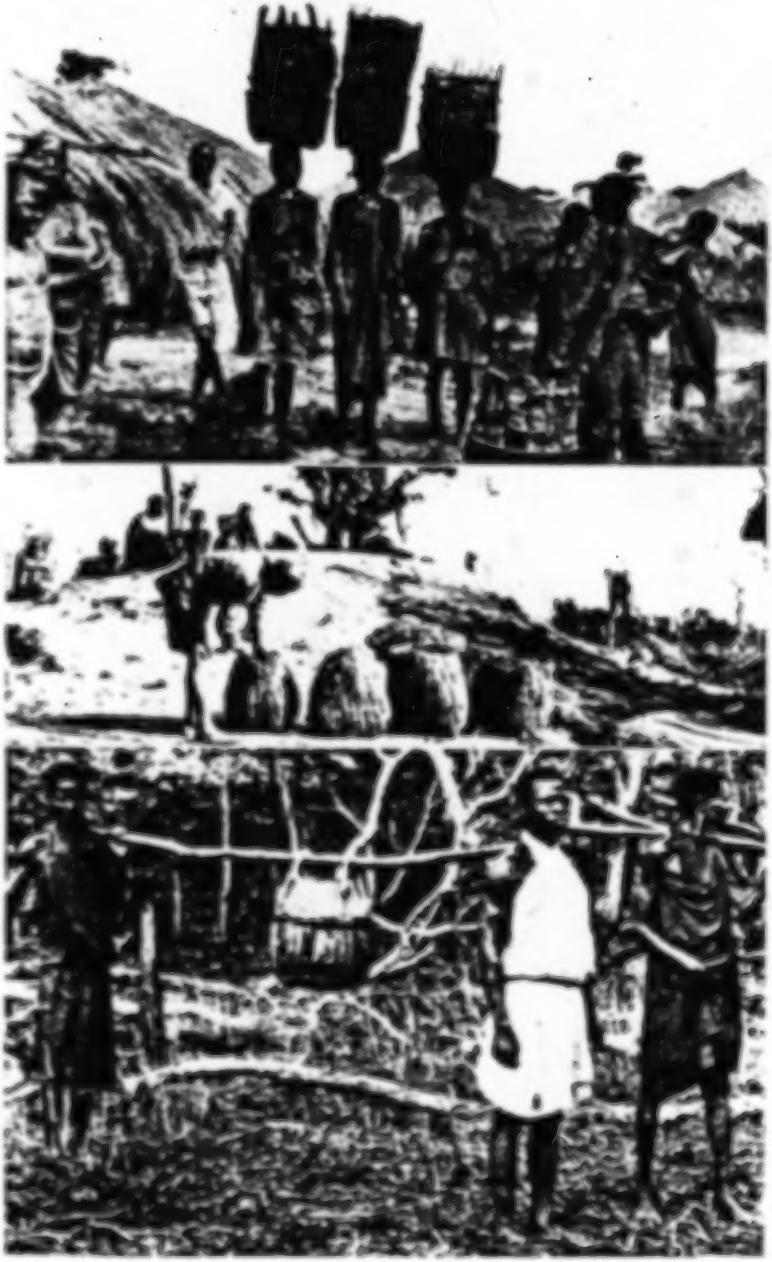

Tribute labour. Carrying in the Paramount Chief's crop of ground-nuts, 1933.

Tribute. Fishing villages send four baskets of fish as their dues to the Paramount Chief, who is sitting with his beer-pot on top of the mound, 1933.

Tribute labour. Carrying blessed seed to sow Chief Nkula's millet garden, 1933.

[facing p. 286]

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

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Harvest. Women reaping the chief's field, Citimukulu, 1934.
A garden fenced against wild animals.

[facing p. 298]

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

142
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[411]

Net-hunting. Bringing out the nets.
The nets stretched across the bush ready for a drive.

facing p. 344

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

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The girls kneeling in an attitude of humility

[p. 3]

[p. 4 is blank]

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

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301
854

A young mother's pride in her first baby
(See p. 47)

[facing p. 48]

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

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Nangoshye, the mistress of the ceremonies. (Note the *mpande* beads described in song 39)
(See p. 61)

881
535

Chisungu solo dance outside a hut
(See p. 59)

[facing p. 49]

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

881*
793
291
301
532

Nangoshye has modelled the crocodile ready for firing
(See pp. 102, 203)

[facing p. 64]

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

The Ceremony

At about twelve o'clock, ten to fifteen women went out into the bush round the village and started to make pottery emblems from clay which had been piled there by the younger helpers. It seemed to be a compulsory task as one of the women who was kept away sent a bracelet as a fine. Nangoshye gave instructions to each woman and allotted them their work, but it was clear that they were all experienced potters. She herself modelled the most important figures using pieces of bark as stands for her work. (She is seen modelling the crocodile p. 64.) The women gossiped but they worked quickly with marked concentration. The atmosphere was that of a sewing bee or Women's Institute meeting in this country, although the women occasionally broke out into rather racy jokes about the fertility emblems (see p. 211). There was no sacred tone about the occasion at all although Nangoshye was decidedly severe in manner, and once told the party they ought not to laugh while making the *mbusa*. A passing man was driven away with mock abuse.

At about two or three, the mother of one of the girls brought food. The women fell on it with their hands covered in clay. It was evidently a snack, a reward, and not a full meal. Later, a dish was sent by the mother of the second girl and was sent back with a peremptory demand for more. Such a small dish showed no respect to the ceremony, Nangoshye declared.

The fourth, fifth and sixth days passed quietly, with further work on the pottery emblems in the morning and more dancing in the hut in the evening. The *banacisungu* were remarkable for their absence. They once appeared with their cloths folded in the ordinary way, but were immediately shouted at. 'Pull down your cloths, you! Good heavens! Are you walking about just like us people of quality? Are you trying to hide your breasts as we do?'[1]

Nangoshye complained constantly that she did not get enough food. It was her pride that was hurt. It was true that people called her to eat with them, she admitted, but they called her from pity only. There was no formal presentation of food, no 'respect'.

[1] Women wear their cloths round their waists when working but above their breasts when at leisure. Princesses always wear them in the latter way.

5:Slaski E-4 (no date) 1950 FQ5 Bemba FQ5
Luapula Peoples

South Africa Company and were given courts in 1924. 622

LEGAL SYSTEM

In the past the judicial officer at the capital was the Muaniancita.(1) An appeal from his decisions could be made to the Kazembe.(2) The *mwafi* (poison-cup ordeal) was administered to the accused man by his nearest relative.(3) The penalty for witchcraft was always death.(4) Adultery, homicide and theft were punished by death, amputation of limbs or genitals, or sale into slavery.(5) Travellers commented on the number of natives, even among the court officials, with mutilated hands and cropped ears.(6) Within the *cikota* homicide seems to have been compoundable. 681 [732]

LAND

The conquered Shila continued to be recognised by the Lunda as the owners of the land, and were consulted when fresh land was wanted for settlement. At present all suitable land in the immediate vicinity of villages is under cultivation but there remains a sufficiency of uncultivated land farther away. 311 423

SLAVERY

Slaves, sold to Arab and Swahili traders, were mostly recruited from among convicted criminals.(7) Livingstone gives this as the reason for Manyuema's reluctance to purchase Kazembe slaves.(8) 567

OTHER CULTURAL FEATURES

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS, DRESS etc.

"The people are black, dolichocephalic, woolly-headed, thin-lipped, of medium stature."(9) The intermingling of tribes has tended to eliminate differences of physical type. Facial scarification and tattooings, once distinctive tribal marks, have become mere fanciful embellishments. Chipping of the upper front teeth is now rare. 141 142 304

On ceremonial and ritual occasions in the past the body was smeared with *mpemba*(10) (a white chalky substance extracted from the river bed) and the hair, worn long and plaited or made into a knob,(11) was powdered with *nkula* (reddish wood-dust).(12) Rubbing earth on arms and breast was a token of the respect due to chiefs.(13) The dress consisted of a bark-cloth skirt, *nyanda*,(14) or a cotton loin-cloth.(15) 302 291

(1) Gamitto, II, p.18.
(2) ibid.
(3) Holmes, p.55.
(4) Burton, p.129.
(5) ibid, p.40.
(6) Livingstone, I, p.248.
(7) Livingstone, I, pp.302-3; II, p.62.
(8) ibid., II, pp.28, 35.
(9) Valdez II, p.241.
(10) Burton, p.103; Gamitto, I, p.307.
(11) Livingstone, I, p.263.
(12) Burton, p.82.
(13) ibid., pp.45, 112; Valdez, II, p.227.
(14) Valdez, op.cit., p.219.
(15) Burton, p.127.